

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submitter Comments:

I realise it is after 5pm on 28th February, but just read the email on Fri night the 28th, and I would like to make a submission anyway in support of Colin of the Inquiry into Volunteering. The further delay is due to wishing to run it by our CQ District President before sending it off, as it could be media-related. We are a non-profit organisation that relies on volunteers for the purpose of fundraising. Being a traditional RSL, we are not a "Club" with pokies etc, we own our own building and run a small bar and kitchen on a fortnightly basis (now due to lack of volunteers). We agree that there is a need for review of work-for-the-dole and jobseeker programs as we have trialled Centrelink work-for-the-dole people to clean the building, as that is the only task that suits the 9am-5pm hours restrictions for those people, however the participants were unreliable and because they didn't turn up, wasted our valuable volunteer time as well. If these people were reliable and enthusiastic, they would have paid employment, but as they do not want to work, they have every excuse to not turn up, as they know they are still going to get the dole, so why "work" for it! We have our names down for the Community Correctional Services Scheme but awaiting suitable and available participants to be placed with us, as their availability times can be out of hours, so more in tune with our requirements. Our Sub Branch now has a Ladies' Auxilliary but as we do not have air conditioning, they have restricted our meal nights to once a month until the cooler months when they will consider 2 x a month, however in the meantime, we will be holding BBQ's on the off fortnights all being well, according to volunteers to work the bar, pick up plates, do dishes, and any other menial tasks. At the moment, these tasks are being done by our service members (ex-Vietnam, Timor and Afghanistan Veterans - average age 75) picking up plates and glasses etc for the civilian community members who support our fundraising efforts, but which defeats the purpose of an RSL's objectives to encourage camaraderie and social connectedness of Veterans through sitting and having a meal and a few drinks, even just a few drinks around the bar with fellow ex-servicemen. The Executive Committee sometimes work up to 30-40 hours per week doing the RSL side of it because that has to happen - we are a Sub Branch front and centre - and this is all volunteering. The governance of volunteer organisations is crippling them as people are expected to be lawyers, accountants etc to run the Sub Branches for example with budgeting, policies and procedures, Compliance by way of regulations and legislation eg we formed a working group for Constitution (where 8 people out of our 119 member base showed up to assist but only half contributed). A lot of people have medical appointments, grandparent duties etc and when say a working bee is called, we get maybe 6-8 people turn up from our service membership base. From our experience, we find that the seniors who are volunteering now are the ones who have volunteered most of their lives as parents with P & C's and parent supporters of kids' sports activities and hobbies etc., so are facing burnout, but don't say "no", and the ones who sit back and expect to turn up and have everything done are the ones who always would have done that! No responsibility just to have a whinge about the way it is done? We realise funding is available to apply for through many organisations however the red tape and delay in the granting (if one is lucky enough to be successful) can take 6 months before we know whether we have to apply for another grant! Meanwhile quotes have expired, contractors are tied up elsewhere or gone bust or many other factors. In relation to the lack of grants that fund essential operational expenses, we are fortunate that our District Branch of RSL Qld has picked up some of our operational expenses which we can claim back annually which helps with the sustainability of our organisation. We agree with the importance of engaging youth in volunteering, however when one of our Food Safety Supervisors enquired of the local TAFE college about obtaining some local students of hospitality to

do some on site assistance with food preparation or service on Fri nights, this gained no support and no momentum, so died in the water.